

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

1. (Canceled)

2. (Currently Amended) A method of operation, to be performed on a computing device, the computing device being a selected one of an inviter computing device and a non-inviter service providing computing device, the method comprising:

receiving a request to extend an invitation to a recipient computing device to join an inviter computing device to jointly consume a content online;

determining whether the inviter computing device is eligible to extend the invitation. The method of claim 1, wherein the determining comprises determining whether the inviter computing device has reached an invitation limit; and,

extending the invitation to the recipient computing device, if it is determined that the inviter computing device is eligible to extend the invitation to the recipient computing device.

3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 4~~2~~, wherein the determining whether the inviter computing device is eligible to extend the invitation comprises determining whether the inviter computing device has reached an invitation limit for a time period.

4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 4~~2~~, wherein the determining whether the inviter computing device is eligible to extend the invitation comprises determining whether the inviter computing device has reached an invitation limit for inviting the recipient computing device to join the computing device to jointly consume the content online.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~4~~2, wherein the determining ~~whether the inviter computing device is eligible to extend the invitation~~ comprises determining whether the inviter computing device has reached an invitation limit for inviting the recipient computing device, within a time period, to join the inviter computing device to jointly consume the content online.

6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~4~~2, wherein if the computing device is the inviter computing device, the method further comprises engaging in an electronic transaction with a distribution computing device to provide the inviter computing device with the required eligibility to extend the invitation.

7. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein the engaging comprises engaging in an electronic transaction that accords the inviter computing device an owner status for the content.

8. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein the engaging comprises engaging in an electronic transaction that accords the inviter computing device a new ownership status, with more rights than a prior ownership status, for the content.

9. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~4~~2, wherein the method further comprises providing the computing device ownership status to the recipient computing device.

10. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~4~~2, wherein the extending is performed in accordance with an instant messaging protocol.

11. (Currently Amended) An article of manufacture, comprising a machine readable medium; and a plurality of executable instructions designed to enable a computing device to perform the method of claim ~~4~~2.

12. (Canceled)

13. (Currently Amended) A computing apparatus comprising:

The computing apparatus of claim 12, a storage medium having stored therein a plurality of programming instructions adapted to receive a request to extend an invitation to a recipient apparatus to join an inviter apparatus to jointly consume a content online, determine whether the inviter apparatus is eligible to extend the invitation, and extend the invitation to the recipient apparatus, if it is determined that the inviter apparatus is eligible to extend the invitation to the recipient apparatus, wherein the programming instructions are adapted to perform the determining by determining at least in part whether the inviter apparatus has reached an invitation limit; and -

a processor coupled to the storage medium to execute the plurality of programming instructions.

14. (Currently Amended) The computing apparatus of claim 4213, wherein the programming instructions are adapted to perform the determining whether the inviter apparatus is eligible to extend the invitation by determining whether the inviter apparatus has reached an invitation limit for a time period.

15. (Currently Amended) The computing apparatus of claim 4213, wherein the programming instructions are adapted to perform the determining whether the inviter apparatus is eligible to extend the invitation by determining whether the inviter apparatus has reached an invitation limit for inviting the recipient apparatus to join the inviter apparatus to jointly consume the content online.

16. (Currently Amended) The computing apparatus of claim 4213, wherein the programming instructions are adapted to perform the determining whether the inviter apparatus is eligible to extend the invitation by determining whether the inviter

apparatus has reached an invitation limit for inviting the recipient apparatus, within a time period, to join the recipient apparatus to jointly consume the content online.

17. (Currently Amended) The computing apparatus of claim ~~42~~13, wherein the computing apparatus is the inviter apparatus, and the programming instructions are further adapted to enable the inviter apparatus to engage in an electronic transaction that provides the inviter apparatus with the required eligibility to extend the invitation.

18. (Original) The computing apparatus of claim 17, wherein the programming instructions are adapted to enable the inviter apparatus to engage in an electronic transaction that accords the apparatus an owner status for the content.

19. (Original) The computing apparatus of claim 17, wherein the programming instructions are adapted to enable the inviter apparatus to engage in an electronic transaction that accords the apparatus a new ownership status, with more rights than a prior ownership status, for the content.

20. (Currently Amended) The computing apparatus of claim ~~42~~13, wherein the programming instructions are further adapted to provide the inviter apparatus' ownership status to the recipient apparatus.

21. (Currently Amended) The computing apparatus of claim ~~42~~13, wherein the programming instructions are further adapted to perform at least a selected one of the receiving and the extending, in accordance with an instant messaging protocol.

22. (Currently Amended) The computing apparatus of claim ~~42~~13, wherein the computing apparatus is the inviter apparatus, the programming instructions are further adapted to implement a game and a game control manager.

23. (Currently Amended) The computing apparatus of claim ~~42~~⁴¹~~13~~, wherein the computing apparatus is the inviter apparatus, and the apparatus is an apparatus selected from a group consisting of a mobile phone, a personal digital assistant, a portable media player, a palm sized computer, a tablet computer, a laptop computer, a desktop computer, and a set-top box.